

09/14/2010 Access to Facilities Meeting Minutes

Present: Ms. Sandra Lugo-Gines, co-chair, Atty. Roy Smith, co-chair, Ms. Virginia Apple, Mr. Robert Burke, Ms. Michelle Burroughs, Mr. Richard Bynam, Ms. Heather N. Collins, Ms. Alejandra Donath, Mr. Robert Kilpatrick, Ms. Debra Novaco, and Mr. Vincent Zimnoch

Submitted by: Michelle Burroughs

- The Committee will table the approval of the July 28, 2010 minutes until the next meeting.
- Atty. Smith reported on his visit with Ms. Lugo-Gines to the Springfield, MA Federal Courthouse on September 3, 2010. The courthouse was built within the last five years. The main focus of the trip was to view the digital docketing system that is utilized by the courthouse. There are two touch screen kiosks available for court visitors to get directions and locate parties that are on the docket. During the day of the visit, one of the kiosks was not operating. These kiosks are not utilized as often as they could be due to the fact that many visitors are unaware that they are touch screens. Attorney Smith and Ms. Lugo-Gines are attempting to find information related to the pricing of the touch screens and scrolling docket. (There is a scrolling sign above the Clerk's office at 80 Washington Street, Hartford that is updated by the Clerk's Office daily.) The Committee viewed pictures that Mr. Smith and Ms. Lugo-Gines took during their visit. There is a scrolling docket that also provides building directions. This docket rotates approximately every 30 seconds. It can be update from any computer in the building using an access code. It is updated daily. The court staff is not fond of this scrolling docket because it is not working the way they intended for it to work. This is likely due the fact that the vendor never met with the client. The court intends to strip the system and re-write the program in-house in order for it to meet the needs of the court. The signage in the building is simplistic, functional and is displayed on flat panels. It is very streamlined and toned down. There is artwork painted on the walls of the courthouse. The office doors are frosted glass with edging. The building seemed to be lacking from an ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) perspective. All of the signs appeared to be in English, and not much Braille was noted.
- When the Signage Subcommittee met on August 24, 2010, it was suggested that Word be used in lieu of Excel for the checklist. The Committee needs an application to document their work and store photos while allowing all members to have access to this documentation. Mr. Vincent Zimnoch of JIS provided an update regarding the feasibility of SharePoint being utilized by the Committee for this purpose. Mr. Zimnoch will view the existing checklist to see if a SharePoint survey can be used by Committee members to enter data upon returning from their court visits. If this is not possible, another option is to provide the Committee with fill-able forms using Word and have the information copied and pasted into an Excel document. Ms. Lugo-Gines will email the checklist, list of Committee members and list of SharePoint users to Mr. Zimnoch. If needed, training will be scheduled for the Committee members to learn to use SharePoint once the SharePoint site is up and running.
- Ms. Lugo-Gines reported out on Ms. Levine's visit to Eckerd College in Florida. The Committee viewed the photos of Ms. Levine's visit. Ms. Levine also met with the

Director of Planning Development and Construction, Mr. William J. McKenna Jr. They discussed the planning process. The college utilizes: electronic signs, whiteboard signs, an online virtual tour, signs with white lettering printed on dark blue or dark green background, way finding signs and flexible signs on paper in a plastic panel. At the next meeting, the Committee will speak with Ms. Levine regarding the College's planning process.

- Attorney Smith and Ms. Lugo-Gines met with: Judge Carroll, Judge Ment, Judge Quinn and Attorney D'Alesio to provide them with an update regarding the Committee's status. It was suggested that having a vendor assess one of our buildings will provide more concrete financial information regarding this initiative. The concern with this is that the company providing the assessment would more than likely have to excuse themselves from bidding on the contract to do the work. Attorney Smith and Ms. Lugo-Gines are working with the Department of Public Works (DPW) to see if they are able to do an assessment of 90 Washington Street and some of the other Judicial buildings. DPW would be able to do an assessment fairly quickly. A question arose regarding what the company doing the assessment would actually be assessing. How does this differ from what the contracted architect does? It was explained that the assessment would entail: observing traffic within the buildings, speaking with the public and court staff, walking through the building to determine the best location and the most effective signage, providing a list of signage offered by the company and assessing the building from an ADA and multi-lingual standpoint.
- The Committee discussed the bidding process and how many bids should go out to vendors for assessments in order to prevent having to eliminate vendors from being eligible to be contracted to do work. Not all 78 Judicial facilities in question are owned by Judicial. The Committee feels that it is important to begin the assessments with the buildings that are most often visited by the public.
- The Committee is focused on the vast issue of way finding, and it was suggested that this needs to be specified in any bid specifications that go to the vendors in order to correct the existing issues.
- The building directories need to be up-to-date in order to be effective. It was noted that maps/directories are not user-friendly for today's generation, which is accustomed to relying on modern technology for way finding.
- There was a concern that the signage recommended by the Committee will exceed the allowance allotted for it.
- Some Committee members feel that paper signage in plastic plaques would be beneficial, as they are inexpensive and work well in an environment when there is constant and frequent change.
- The list of local committee members needs to be approved by Atty. D'Alesio. The local committees will be charged with assessing every building. The local committees will be assigned to work within their districts. The local committees would be asked to visit the public facilities during different times of day, on different days of the week. Ms. Lugo-Gines suggested that the Committee members take their own minutes when meeting with local committees. Ms. Lugo-Gines explained that the local committees will need to comply with FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) requirements. The local

committees will be provided with: FOIA guidelines, ADA information, building codes for each town, information already gathered by the Committee, the checklist, and language statistics. Ms. Lugo-Gines will confirm with Attorney Martin Libbin that the local committees will need to comply with FOIA requirements. The Committee will invite Atty. Libbin to the next meeting to discuss how the FOIA requirements apply to the local committees. Ms. Lugo-Gines will forward the Committee's concerns regarding FOIA compliance to Atty. Libbin.

- The Committee questioned the need of the formation of local committees. In lieu of forming local committees, it was suggested that the Committee members conduct focus groups with staff members from each Judicial District. Instead of forming local committees to assess each facility within a given district, some Committee members like the idea of teaming up with other Committee members to assess all of the facilities within the district they are assigned to. Attorney Smith and Ms. Lugo-Gines will speak with Atty. D'Alesio regarding these suggestions when they meet with him on Thursday.
- The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, November 9, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. (See *below*).

Addendum: Due to the lack of availability of rooms, the meeting was rescheduled for **Monday, November 8, 2010 at 2:00 p.m** at 99 East River Drive, East Hartford, Conference Room 707.